If you are familiar with the 5 paragraph essay, be prepared to move beyond its constraints.

- As a developmental tool, the 5 paragraph essay model has its benefits in that it teaches the importance of having a thesis statement that relates to all the supporting points listed in the body of the essay. However, in academics, papers are often 5, 10, even 20 pages. By using the 5 paragraph essay model, your paragraphs would end up being 2-3 pages long, which is far too long for an effective paragraph, and ultimately it would limit the breadth of your essay.
- Likewise, the five paragraph essay’s thesis is too limiting and too much like a “list.” Rather than listing the specific points of the essay, the thesis should articulate an essay’s subject and main point in a more general manner.
- So keep it in mind as a developmental tool, but it’s now time to broaden your horizons and move beyond its constraints.

An academic essay is broken up into three main parts: the intro, the body, and the conclusion.

- **the intro** should include a well-developed method of introduction, and a thesis statement. Some say that it is best to have the thesis statement as the first sentence, some say it is best to have it at the end. The truth is, depending on the effect you want, the thesis statement can go anywhere in the intro, whether it is one paragraph or two.
- **the body** of an academic essay consists of a series of paragraphs meant to expose, illustrate, and/or support a main point. With that, distinct units of supporting information (body paragraphs) should begin with a topic sentence which articulates the subject and main point. If a longer unit of information is broken up into two or more paragraphs, it isn’t necessary to incorporate topic sentences into each of them; topic sentences should begin each new unit of information, not necessarily each body paragraph.
- **the conclusion** is at the end of the essay. It is necessary in order to close off the argument/claim you present to your readers. There are several methods of conclusion that can help leave your reader satisfied that all points have been covered.

***

or:

intro = tell ’em what you’re gonna tell ’em

body = tell ’em

conclusion = tell ’em what you told ’em

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Note:
None of the methods listed in the sections below are mutually exclusive. Feel free to mix and match if you'd like. Just remember not to overdo it; simplicity and clarity are often the best ways to get your point across.

Intro:

The *intro* section of the essay introduces the readers to the claim that they will be reading. We often use intros even in casual speech:

“Hey, remember that movie we went to last week...”

*By starting the conversation like this, you are letting your friend know what it is you want to talk about, preparing your listener for what you are about to say.*

An academic essay’s intro functions in very much the same manner. You are preparing your readers to enter into a field of discussion in which you will try to persuade them of a certain claim or argument. You’re preparing them for what you’re about to say.

tips for intros:

- grab your readers’ attention and make them want to read on
- reveal the essay’s central idea as expressed in the thesis
- guide readers to important ideas in the body
- provide background/explanation to help readers understand the essay’s purpose and thesis

methods of intro:

1. use a startling remark or statistic
2. ask a question or presents a problem
3. challenge a widely held opinion or assumption
4. use compare/contrast, or an analogy
5. tell an anecdote or describe a scene
6. use a memorable quotation
7. define an important term or concept
8. open with a paradox (an apparently contradictory statement)
The body of the essay is, perhaps, the most important part. It is where you will support the claim that you have made in your intro. It is the proof for the thesis you're providing. Just like a lawyer in a courtroom, you begin with an opening statement (intro with a thesis: my client is innocent or my client is guilty). The body of the essay then becomes where you present the jury (your readers) with as much info as possible to convince them that your claim (thesis) is valid.

The best way to accomplish this is to do sufficient research on the subject you’ve chosen and to provide that research via expert testimonies, quotes and paraphrases (in-text citations) of the information you have researched. Including well-developed body paragraphs is an important element in a successful academic essay.

**methods of developing paragraphs:**

- make sure that all points/methods directly support the subject of your essay, otherwise the information will be useless and detract from the effectiveness of your essay’s purpose.

  1. **examples/illustrations:** develop an idea with specific and concrete examples
  2. **narration:** tell a relevant story or anecdote
  3. **description:** paint a picture for your reader using specific and concrete details
  4. **process:** describe how something works
  5. **compare and contrast:** point out similarities/differences
  6. **analogy:** compare a difficult idea/concept with something the reader will more easily understand
  7. **cause and effect:** show the result of an action, or an action that leads to a result
  8. **classification/division:** distinguish between types or classes
  9. **definition:** explain a difficult term or concept in your own words

**note:** An important part of developing argumentative essays comes from your own background, ideology, life, etc. To that end, the following should also be incorporated to sufficiently develop your essays.

- **analysis:** provide some analysis for your readers. Examine and evaluate an idea related to your topic. Discuss the relevance or meaning of images in an advertisement or lyrics in a song. Write about the relationship between the form and content of any research used. What does it mean? How does it relate to support your thesis?

- **personal insight:** in your own words, how do you feel about your topic? How does it fit into your life? How does it affect you? Give any personal experiences you have with the topic at hand. In other words, put yourself in the essay and discuss how you feel about the topic at hand, and why you feel the way you do.

*When you include research, quotes, support, data, and/or examples from outside sources, explain to your reader why you think they are relevant to your claim. Don’t assume that your readers can see their relevance, explain it to them. Everyone has different ideas about why things are – it is your job as the writer to show your readers your ideas via your own personal insight and analysis.*
Conclusion:

After having drafted the intro and the body, it is time to consider the conclusion. Rather than simply ending an essay with the last body paragraph, you want to make sure to close off the argument for your readers so that they feel as if everything has been wrapped up nicely and neatly. One way to distinguish between a body paragraph and a conclusion is that a conclusion contains no new supporting information. If you are including information that the reader has not yet been exposed to, that very well could be another body paragraph meant for supporting your claim, not for closing off your argument.

Tips for conclusions:

- leave your reader satisfied that the discussion is complete
- give readers something to think about or act upon
- remind readers of central idea or thesis of the essay
- summarize and rephrase the most important support used in the body of the essay

Methods of conclusion:

1. rephrase or make reference to your thesis
2. summarize or rephrase your main points
3. offer advice or make a call to action
4. explain how a problem was solved
5. ask a rhetorical question
6. close with a memorable statement or quote
7. respond to a question from your intro